

There Is No Compromise

by Jenavira

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Summary: Biggs, Wedge, and Porkins reflect on the Rebellion and Empire the night before the first Death Star battle.

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Disclaimer: Wedge, Biggs, and Porkins are owned by Lucasfilm, Ltd., despite the fact that said company seems to be refusing to acknowledge their existence. The inscription belongs to Mike Stackpole, I guess; it appeared on p. 73 (H) of his novel I, Jedi.

Well, this story is a firstâ€¦I got the idea for it at six in the morning, and by one (having been interrupted many times by teachers who thought I was in school to learn), it was finished. It's just a little character-driven vignette, based on some of the stuff in I, Jedi and the strange things that run through my brain at 6 AM. Enjoy.

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The familiar dimensions of the stone room seemed much more confining this night than they ever had before as Wedge, Biggs, and Jek collapsed on their bunks.

"I don't think I'm ever going to be able to sleep tonight," Wedge muttered as he threw himself down on his cot. "They want us to fight tomorrow, and after all that worrying about the Princess, and us missing a pilotâ€¦"

"You know that Skywalker kid, Biggs," Jek Porkins interjected. "D'you

think he'll be okay? I mean, just a couple of hours in a sim flightâ€|"

"Luke? He'll be fine," Biggs replied in a self-assured tone. "We used to race our landspeeders through Beggar's Canyon back on Tatooine - if he could make it through four years of that, he can handle a straight trench run."

"With gun turrets shooting at him?" Wedge asked skeptically.

"Sure," Biggs replied as he shrugged off his jacket and tossed it on his cot. "You ever seen a bunch of pissed-off Sandpeople?" He raised his hands, imitating the shape of a rifle. "Pow! We got more bullets in those speedersâ€|"

"Bullets?" Porkins asked, half laughing.

"Yeah, bullets," Wedge replied in the same tone. "You knew he came from some backwater hole in the galaxyâ€|he's just lucky we decided to be generous and dig him out." Wedge grinned at his friend.

"You? Generous?" Biggs shot back in offended laughter, throwing the first thing that came to hand - his pillow - at Wedge's head. Wedge chucked it back, and Biggs caught it as he fell back onto his cot.

When they stopped laughing, Jek suddenly sobered. "You know, guys, I've been thinkingâ€|this could really be it."

"What, Biggs's pillow-throwing abilities?" Wedge asked, still in a jovial mood.

"No, I'm serious," Porkins replied. "This Death Star thing tomorrowâ€|this could be the end of the war!"

"You think the destruction of one superweapon is going to take down the Empire?" Biggs scoffed. "If we can even destroy it, that is."

"Oh, come on, Biggs, be confident!" Wedge shot back. "With what we know, all you'll need is a halfway-descent targeting computer and Boom! Imperial shrapnel." He frowned. "But Porkins could be rightâ€|Rumor's got it that Vader's on that thing right now."

"C'mon, right - like anyone here would know where a Sith Lord is hanging around," Porkins replied.

Wedge shrugged - awkwardly, seeing as how he was still lying on his back. "Whateverâ€|but still, it'd be a big blow to Imperial morale. Space station that big has to have a huge crew."

"Yeah," Biggs said speculatively. "And when they put it in the history books, it'll say, 'Death Star, destroyed by the great Wedge Antillesâ€|"

"With the aid of his wingman, Biggs Darklighter," Wedge interrupted.

"Of course," replied Biggs cheerfully, "and the backup firing

squadâ€| "

"Jek Porkins!" Wedge and Biggs chorused, as Jek took his bows.

They spent the rest of the night that way, running high on adrenaline, planning out the battle with the kind of cocky security of men who just can't imagine the death of their comrades.

As the fourth moon of Yavin moved into the reddish glow of dawn refracted through the gas giant, the three pilots had still not gotten any sleep, but they weren't tired. Their excitement had been raised - in just hours, they would fly against the Empire's most formidable weapon yet.

"Y'know, I was thinking," Biggs reflected from his position stretched out across the middle of the floor, "we really ought to leave something here. You know, â€|an inscription or something," he said when his roommates looked at him askance.

"You thinkâ€|" Porkins started, but Wedge cut him off.

"Sure, for whoever's in here next. We'll be promoted out of this hole after **this** battle," he said, nudging Porkins and grinning.

"Yeahâ€|yeah," Jek replied, grinning back. "Anyone got anything sharp?"

"Flight suit buckle?" Biggs suggested.

"Works for me," Wedge said.

There was a moment of silence as Biggs flipped over on his stomach and began to etch. "So, other than our namesâ€|what do you want to put on this thing?" Biggs asked conversationally. The other men thought for a moment more.

"The Empire or us," Porkins said quietly.

"Yesâ€|yeah, that's it! Wedge replied. "The Empire or Us. There is no compromise."

"That's right," Biggs said, flashing a grin over his shoulder. "To the death of the Empire, no compromise. There'll be no stopping us."

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